COBBETT'S WEEKLY POLITICAL REGISTER.

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"I know the ministers" [Messrs. PITT and DUNDAS] "will think it little less than an acquittal, that they "are not charged with having *taken to themselves* some part of the money, of which they have made so liberal "a donation to their partisans, though the charge may be indisputably fixed upon the corruption of their "politics. For my part, I follow their crimes to that point to which legal presumptions and natural in- "dications lead me, without considering what species of evil motives tends most to aggravate or to ex- "tenuate the guilt of their conduct. But, if I am to speak my private sentiments, I think, that, in a "thousand cases for one, it would be far less mischievous to the public, and full as little dishonourable to "themselves, to be polluted with direct bribery, than thus to become a standing auxiliary, to the usury and "peculation of multitudes, in order to obtain a corrupt support to their power. It is by *bribing*, not so "often by *being bribed*, that wicked politicians bring ruin on mankind."——BURKE. Speech on the Nabob of Arcot's debts, 28th Feb. 1805. See his Works, Vol. IV. p. 314.

SUMMARY OF POLITICS.

MEETINGS OF THE PEOPLE.—— Under the above general head, several subjects, which were, and which still are, entitled to particular attention, would have been noticed within the last three or four weeks, had not the delinquency of the second person in the king's ministry rendered, for the time, every other subject comparatively unimportant. The conduct and the apparent views of the powers of the Continent; the critical situation of affairs in the East-Indies; the dangers to which our colonies in the West-Indies have become exposed, through the negligence or the ignorance and imbecility of those, whose duty it was to provide against the attempts, recently made by the enemy in that quarter; the distracted state of Ireland, and the imminent peril to the whole empire from the possible, and even the probable, effects of the discontents there prevailing: these are all subjects, which require only to be named to command the most serious attention. Look which way we will, the eye is sure to light upon some circumstance of menacing aspect. But, as the mariner, on whose parched and quivering lips death is contending with life, is totally unaffected by those conflicts of the elements, which, while he was in health, were wont to strike terror to his heart; so the people of England, smarting under the injuries which they have experienced, and do yet experience, from those whose duty it was to watch over and protect their persons and their property, appear to be, as well might be expected, quite insensible to the dangers that threaten them from without. They were chearfully making sacrifices of every sort; zealously exerting themselves in every way, for the defence of their country, and the preservation of their government; but, in the midst of those sacrifices and exertions, circumstances arise, facts come to light, which lead them to doubt, not only whether their exertions will be useless, as to the producing of any good, but, whether they may not produce evil, by prolonging the duration of that system of corruption, the secret springs of which have now been exposed, and the tendency of which obviously is the total annihilation of that throne and of those liberties, which it is the bounden duty as well as the anxious desire of the people to preserve. That such a *doubt*, and at such a time, is most dangerous no one will, I think, deny; and that it exists must be evident to all those who have either eyes or ears; for, the effect produced by the discoveries of the TENTH REPORT is seen in every countenance, and heard from every mouth. Reproach people with forgetting the dangers to be apprehended from invasion, and they instantly remind you, that, if their earnings are to be taken from them and heaped upon upstarts, instead of being applied to the exigencies of the state; if the money they are compelled to pay in taxes is to be used for the advantage of those who handle it, and in defiance of all law; and, if, when men are accused, and are proved to be guilty, of misapplying the public money, those men find, even in the ministers themselves, advocates to palliate, not to say justify, their conduct: if such be our situation, say the people, it behoves us, before we think any more about the *dangers of invasion*, to ascertain whether this our internal situation *is to be changed*; to ascertain whether, in defending the country, we are *really* defending and protecting any body but the Melvilles, the Trotters, &c. &c. This is the language, not only of the hearts, but of the mouths of the people; and, that, at a moment so perilous, such a doubt should have been started must be matter of deep regret with every man who is anxious for the welfare of his country. But, it has been started; the acknowledged delinquency, the clearly-proved malversation of some men high in office, and the endeavours made by others to screen them, have excited this dangerous doubt in the minds of the peo-

ple; and, whatever may be the hopes of impudence and of hypocrisy, rendered confident by long uninterrupted success, till this doubt shall receive, in the measures of the legislative and executive branches of the government, an unequivocal and satisfactory solution, the people will feel perfectly indifferent as to the dangers to be apprehended from without. Their attachment, not to the King and his royal house; not to the parliament; not to the Constitution; but, generally and indiscriminately, to all public institutions and all public persons, their attachment has received *a rude and sudden shock*. Their minds are troubled with doubts: they are unsettled: they know not what to think of any body or of any thing: and, if we look back but a very little way into history, we shall find, that the maxim of St. Francis will apply to politics as well as to theology, namely, that "when "the Devil finds a man without a creed, "he has always one ready to furnish him "with." To restore the public mind, therefore, to a settled state; to restore the government, not the *ministry*, for that were a trifle, but the *whole government*, to the confidence of the people, the correction of abuses, the detection of peculation, and the *punishment* of peculators, must proceed, till there be a real reform, till real redress be afforded. The ministerial prints, all of which, be it well remembered, insisted, previous to the decision of the House of Commons on the 8th instant, that both Lord Melville and Mr. Trotter were perfectly innocent, and which stigmatised all the publications against those persons, the report of the Commissioners not excepted, as *gross libels*; these hirelings of corruption are now endeavouring to represent the MEETINGS OF THE PEOPLE, and the proceedings in those meetings, as *factious*, and even as *jacobinical!* They have not, as yet, declared them to be absolutely *seditious*; but, it would not be very wonderful if they were to declare them so in a very little time, and, accordingly, to recommend the *suspension of the Habeas Corpus Act*. The Common Hall of the City of London, whose resolutions will be found at length in a subsequent page of this sheet, was the most orderly and most respectable, as well as the most numerously attended, of any Common Hall that has been assembled for many years. Nothing of a factious spirit has any where made its appearance. No noise, no unruly behaviour; none of that "clamour "out of doors," that Mr. Pitt thought proper to talk of. Every requisition; every resolution and petition, has been conceived in a temper of soberness, in a spirit of patriotism and loyalty. There has been nothing *violent* in any quarter; but, there has been, and there is, in every part of the kingdom, more *firmness* than, perhaps, ever was visible upon any former occasion. We hear, in fact, and His Majesty and the Parliament will soon hear, the unanimous voice of a loyal and dutiful people, but, of a people who deeply feel their injuries, and who are resolved to use all lawful and constitutional means in order to obtain redress. These are the proceedings, with respect to which the minister's paper, the SUN, has made the following remarks: "Such a conduct "is exactly conformable to the *furious spirit* "*of the French Reformers*. What a melan-"choly reflection must it be to every man "who feels as Englishmen should feel, that "so much acrimony and party-violence "should exist *while the enemy is at the door*. "To that enemy such bitter and disgraceful "animosity must *afford encouragement*, and "induce him to think that he *will find an* "*easy prey in people so much divided among* "*themselves*." These writers always take care to close with a falsehood. The people are *not* "divided amongst themselves." The people are *unanimous*. Witness the Common Hall, where persons of any rank in the City of London, from journeymen shoemakers to Aldermen and members of parliament were assembled. If, therefore, the enemy looks at the people now, he will find them firmly united, and that, too, against the enemy's *best friends*, the peculators, the betrayers of the public trust, the wasters of the public treasure, the corrupt hypocrites, who, under professions of purity, have, for so many years, in conjunction with contractors, jobbers, and Jews, been squeezing out the resources of the country, and adding to that immense national debt, which the minister, long before these peculations were discovered, denominated "*the* "*best ally of France*." So far, therefore, from affording the enemy encouragement by their present proceedings, the people will damp his hopes, especially if they succeed, and it were almost treason to suppose that they will not, in obtaining complete redress, and just punishment upon those, who have so long abused the confidence of their Sovereign and their country. Yes, the *enemy, is at the door*: granted, though this same Pitt newspaper assured us, not a month ago, that all danger from invasion was now over. Granted that he is at the door; but, had he got in; were he landed in Kent, there would be no reason why the people should not proceed in their constitutional

requests to have justice done them. To hold a meeting takes up but very little time. Neither the army nor the navy is called in to assist at meetings. To hold meetings, disturbs no part of the community; and, the more pressing are the exigencies of the state, the greater is the necessity for satisfying the people, that the sacrifices they make are for the service of their country. And, when we survey the orderly, the quiet, the patient conduct of the people, upon this occasion, is it not almost too much to bear, to hear a hireling of the Treasury assert, that this conduct is "*exactly* conformable to the *furious spirit* of the *French* "*Reformers?*" Where has this spirit appeared? Were the Mayor of London and the Sheriffs of Middlesex *hurried* on by a furious spirit? The Mayor bid the persons, who requested the Common Hall to be assembled, wait three days for his answer. He then told them, on a Thursday, that he should be *busy all the next week*; but, that, after that he would comply with their request. This was the account of the matter given in the public prints. Now, will any one impute *fury* to the persons, who made this requisition? Was a "furious spirit" visible at the Common Hall? And is it not a shameful misrepresentation to compare the present conduct of the people to the conduct of the French Reformers? In the county of Middlesex the meeting has been put off to the 2d of May. The Sheriffs have, indeed, behaved with great fairness and impartiality upon the occasion, and, therefore, their conduct is the subject of general and deserved praise; but, what I insist on is, that neither the leaders in these meetings nor the mass of the people are to be accused of *fury* and *clamour*; but that, on the contrary, their conduct has been marked with a degree of patience rather too nearly, perhaps, bordering upon what is called *sang froid*, and which is certainly to be ascribed, not so much to their want of feeling a becoming degree of indignation, as to that *indifference* towards public concerns, which the detection of such base hypocrisy in public men is but too apt to create, and which, by the bye, the partisans of the Pitts and Addingtons are now endeavouring to render universal, by affecting to treat as chimerical the idea of common honesty in ministers of state *. I trust, however, that these endeavours will prove fruitless; that the people will yet hope to find honesty and sincerity in the persons chosen to conduct their affairs; and, that, in this hope, they will proceed, in an orderly and constitutional manner, to communicate their sentiments as to the past, and their wishes as to the future, to the parliament, or to his Majesty, as the occasion may appear to them to require. The city of London, in Common Hall, has set the laudable example. The city of Salisbury, where the right of election is *confined to the corporation*, has been the first to follow that example, and, in a petition to the House of Commons, conveyed in language at once respectful and dignified, mild and resolute, loyal and public-spirited, has furnished a striking proof, that the complaints against Lord Melville, his associates, and abettors, have not their rise in a spirit of faction, nor in popular clamour. This petition was presented on Thursday, the 25th instant, by Lord Viscount Folkestone, one of the members for Salisbury; and, it is to be hoped, that few cities and boroughs, will lose this opportunity of convincing the people, that they are not such "*rotten*" parts of the body politic as they have been suspected to be. At the same time, however, it must be confessed, that this is the touch-stone; and that a few weeks will prove, whether Mr. Pitt's former description of the House of Commons was true, or whether it was false. As to following the example of the "French "Reformers," if this accusation is to be brought against every one, who endeavours to put an end to the system of peculation and corruption, then what have we gained by preserving our government against the effects of the French revolution? What have we gained by a ten or twelve years' war? If to

* In the preceding sheet, p. 592, I observed, that all the ADDINGTONS and their relations and dependents voted against MR. WHITBREAD'S motion for censuring Lord Melville. I mentioned their names, but omitted that of MR. EASTCOURT, who is Mr. Henry Addington (now Viscount Sidmouth's) *nephew*, and who came in a member for the famous borough of DEVIZES, in lieu of Mr. Henry Addington, when he was made into a Viscount, and, of course, could no longer sit in the House of Commons himself. The Common Hall of London appear to have had this in view, when they passed a vote of thanks to LORD ST. VINCENT, "who *alone*," say they, adopted the measure which has brought to light the peculations complained of.——Upon this subject of voting and of Peer-making, it is worthy of notice, that the ministerial prints now state the intention of the minister to cause to be made peers no less than *five* of the members of the House of Commons, who voted against the motion for censuring Lord Melville!

permit ourselves to be plundered by Melville and Trotter, and their like, be necessary to the preservation of the government; if openly and decidedly to express our indignation at such practices, and to demand redress; if this be to "follow the example of "the French Reformers;" if this be to put our government in imminent danger of subversion; then, I should be glad to know what worse could have happened to us, had we followed the example of the French Reformers sooner. What worse than to be compelled silently to submit to the most galling of all injuries, to be pillaged in the name, and under all the forms, of law; to be made, in the hands of peculators, the instruments of plundering one another and of holding one another in a state of abject submission to their will? It this were the case; if we could suppose it possible that a state of things like this should exist in our country, what, again I ask, should we have gained by all the sacrifices that we have made to preserve our country from revolution and subjugation? But, this, I trust in God, never will be the case in England. I trust we shall always be at liberty to exercise the rights we are now exercising, that of demanding, in a constitutional way, a redress of our grievances; and, certain I am that none but peculators and their friends will interpose their influence to prevent that redress from being granted; for, it is utterly impossible, that such prevention should be attempted by any one who has not some selfish purpose to answer, and with whom any risk to the constitution is not of weight inferior to that of the risk which he himself runs from a radical reform of abuses, and a just punishment of the workers in corruption. It is curious enough to hear the advocates of the peculators, which advocates are, for the most part, peculators themselves; it is truly curious to hear *them* expressing their alarm, lest the present agitation of the public mind should lead to an imitation of the example of the French reformers, when it must be evident to every one, that those who are calling upon the parliament and the throne for redress, those who are endeavouring to obtain that redress, are taking the most effectual means of removing all pretext for popular violence, while, it must be equally evident, on the other hand, that the peculators are the only persons, to whom a subversion of all order, justice, and law, would be welcome. When we consider this, we cease to wonder at their present conduct. Much surprise has been expressed at their endeavours to thwart all the efforts of those who would prosecute the good work that has been begun: their conduct, in this respect, has been called desperate: but, let it be remembered, that their *situation is desperate*; and, that, if *real* redress be afforded, it will be little consolation *to them* that the government is thereby preserved. In changes tending to a subversion of the government and laws, the guilty, those to whom the laws are a terror, will never be found the hindmost. The peculators, therefore, are, in their several ways and degrees, endeavouring, at all risks, to prevent the just desires of the people from being complied with; if they succeed without producing a popular tumult, they are safe, for a while at least; and if popular tumult, together with all its attendant mischiefs, the subversion of the law, the destruction of property and of rank, should be the consequences, then will the peculators have *a chance* of escaping. So that, the worst possible thing for them, is, that prompt redress should be granted to the people; because, in such redress, would necessarily be included their punishment. Very natural, therefore, is their conduct; very natural is it for them to prefer general discontent before a redress of grievances; but, it requires the full exertion of even their brazen faculties to *begin* the cry against popular violence, and to affect an anxiety for the safety of the constitution; that constitution, which they are using their utmost endeavours to render a nullity, and to induce the people no longer to confide in it; no longer to look to it as a rock of defence against oppression. ——Lest the cry of democratic fury should fail, that of *party* has been set up. But, then, here arises a difficulty, which is, that, if it be a party matter, the unanimous voice of the people is with the party opposed to the ministry. The fact is, however, that it is no party matter; or, if such it must be called, it is the party of the incorrupt against the party of the corrupt; it is the enemies of peculation against peculators; it is the loyal and honest part of the nation against the public robbers.

MR. PITT'S CONDUCT. —— Though I have not time to enter, here, upon the whole of this gentleman's case, I cannot refrain from adverting to a point or two which appear to me to call for more immediate notice.——His endeavours to prevent any further steps being taken, with respect to the *dismission* of his friend Melville, I should have made some remarks on; but, that subject the reader will find amply and most ably discussed, in an article which I have extracted from the Morning Chronicle of Monday last, and which will be found in a

subsequent page. To that article I beg leave to direct the reader's attention, and having so done, I look upon the matter to which it relates as being placed beyond the reach of misrepresentation.——The next point to be adverted to, is, Mr. Pitt's declaration relative to the *actual loss* sustained by the people from the malversations of Dundas and Trotter. I have before, and even twice before, made some observations upon this part of the subject; and, I think, that, as far as those observations have gone, they have generally been regarded as having completely refuted the position of Mr. Pitt, that because there was finally, in Dundas's case, *no defalcation*; because the balance due to the public was *at last* fully paid in, there was, upon the whole, no *loss* to the public. This position I have, I think, completely refuted before; but, since the publication of the preceding sheet, I have fallen upon a document, which, had I seen it sooner, I should have made use of for the purpose of making Mr. Pitt *refute himself*. The document I allude to, is, a speech made by that gentleman, when, on the 17th of February, in the virgin year of 1785, he moved for leave to bring in a bill, which afterwards became that very act of parliament, which Dundas has now been censured for having grossly violated. In my endeavours to show, that the public had sustained a *loss* from this violation of the law, I stated, that, as to that part of the loss (for it was only one part, and that not the principal part) which arose from the *unnecessary* balances kept in the hands of Dundas and Trotter, "to know the amount of the actual loss to "the public in this way, the first thing to "do, is, to ascertain the average unnecessary balance in the hands of the Treasurer, and then reckon the amount of "the compound interest on it at the end "of Dundas's Treasurership, which, alone, "will, probably, be found to amount to "two or three hundred thousand pounds." I stated, that "the amount of this balance, "might have remained undrawn from the "Exchequer, and that the Lords of the "Treasury might, of course, have suffered "it to remain in the pockets of the people." This was the principle upon which I argued; and, if this principle be admitted; nay if the whole of the doctrine be found to have been laid down by Mr. Pitt, and that, too, at the very moment when he was offering the new-violated act to the House of Commons, where shall we look for an explanation of the motive which has now induced him to declare, that there has been *no loss* to the public from the conduct of Dundas and Trotter? The speech, now about to be quoted from, being made in a committee of the whole House upon that part of the King's speech recommending an early attention to the reports of the Commissioners of Accounts, embraced other matters as well as those immediately connected with the Treasurership of the Navy. Mr. Pitt began with the Receiver General, and, in speaking of *the balances* they held in their hands, he laid down the doctrine, to which the nation should now hold him. The Receivers General had, too, made the *insufficiency of their salary* the pretext of using the public money for their private advantage. Now, then, let us hear what Mr. Pitt, the pure, the immaculate, the heaven born reformer and economist, Pitt; let us hear what he said of such a practice, when he found it had existed under *other* administrations. "The "Commissioners are induced to think, that "the Receiver General of the Land Tax is "not warranted" [though, observe, there was *no law* against it] "in the detention of "the public money, either by the difficulty "of procuring bills, or by the *insufficiency* "*of his salary*. These practices have been "considered by the Commissioners in a "proper point of view; for admitting that "the allowance is not adequate to his pains, "yet this is *not sufficient to justify him in* "*his detention of a considerable balance*. The "*community at large are greatly hurt* by "this mode of transacting business." Then, as to the degree in which the community are hurt, the following was his statement. "The Commissioners of Accounts have endeavoured to form some computation "of the *loss* sustained by the public "from the detention of the money by "the Receiver General, and, for that purpose, they called for an account of the "quarterly returns made by him to the tax-"office, whence it appears, that the average amount in his hands from the 5th of "July, 1788, to the 6th of July following, "was 334,061l. the interest of which, at "only 4 per centum, being 13,362l. a year; "and *this is the sum, which, it is imagined,* "*the public has paid for want of the use of* "*their money*." That this is a case exactly in point, no one can deny; and, therefore, again I ask: where are we to look for the motive, which could induce this Mr. Pitt to assert, and to assert over and over again, that the public has sustained *no loss whatever* from the misapplication of the public money by Dundas and Trotter, though it be clearly proved by the Tenth Report and the accompanying documents, that much larger balances than were necessary for the public

service were held in the hands of those persons, and that, too, at a time, when Mr. Pitt himself, as first Lord of the Treasury, was driven to the miserable and disgraceful expedient of fabricating *wind bills* with the aid of a contractor and a jew broker? *Where* are we, I say, to look for the motive, which could induce him to make this assertion!——Leaving this question to be answered by the reader, I should now advert once more to the topic of *disinterestedness*; a topic not by any means to be let drop; for, the partisans of peculation, perceiving that, amongst the vulgar, both great and little, the *pocketting* of the money is regarded as the most heinous part of the offence, are exerting their powers to the utmost to wipe *that* away. This topic I must, however, defer till my next, begging, in the mean while, such of my readers, as happen to possess the works of BURKE, to refer to, and to read from one end to the other, that speech, from which my motto is taken. I beg them well to consider the important truth inculcated by that motto; to call to mind, and to keep steadily in view, the *two persons*, to whose conduct the speech related; and, to remember, that the famous arrangement respecting the nabob of Arcot's debts was a contemporary with the act for regulating the Office of the Treasurer of the Navy and with all those boasted plans of *economical reform*, of the *salutary* effects of which Sir Charles Pole and his brother commissioners have now brought to light such indubitable proofs.

PARLIAMENTARY DIVISIONS. —— On Thursday, the 25th instant, Mr. Whitbread made a motion for the "appointment of a "Select Committee to make further in-"quiry into the matters contained in the "Tenth Report of the Commissioners of "Naval Inquiry." To this Mr. Pitt moved an amendment, that the committee should be limited as to the objects of their inquiry; "that they should be empowered to inquire "into the particular application of the Na-"val money to other purposes, and also to "consider of the requisitions made to the "Chancellor of the Exchequer, or to any "of the Commissioners of his Majesty's "Treasury, as to the issuing of money, and "as to the debt due to the Crown by the "late Mr. Jellicoe." This amendment was carried 229, against 151, leaving the minister a majority of 78; and the reader will clearly perceive, that the committee is thus *prevented from making any inquiry whatever as to the money transactions of Dundas and Trotter!* After the above, another division took place upon the mode of constituting the committee. Mr. Whitbread proposed twenty one persons, whom he named. To this Mr. Pitt objected, and moved for a committee by *ballot*; on which Mr. Fox observed, that he was astonished, that the minister should, upon a subject of such moment, resort to this mode; that nothing but perfect fairness could satisfy the ends of justice, and convince the people that the parliament was in earnest; that it was well understood, that a select committee of 21, if chosen by ballot, was a committee of persons, who spoke the sentiments of the minister; that if this were chosen in that way, jealousy and distrust would be the consequence; that this was a committee to try the ministers themselves; and, that it was a monstrous thing, that it should be nominated in a way that would countenance the supposition of influence.—Upon a division, however, there appeared for the minister, 251, and against him 120. ——On the same day, to the utter astonishment of all those who witnessed the scene, and who had duly reflected upon the pressing nature of the case, Mr. Pitt, the same gentleman who brought in the act that *Viscount* Melville has just been censured for grossly violating; the same gentleman, who, in the very hour that he proposed the said act, proposed to erect, and did afterwards erect, a Board of Commissioners, for detecting and correcting abuses; the same gentleman who, together with his friend Dundas, made the memorable arrangement with Paul Benfield and others relative to the debts of the Nabob of Arcot; the same gentleman who was first Lord of the Treasury and Chancellor of the Exchequer at the time when Mr. Long, the Secretary of the Treasury, is, by Trotter, said to have *returned* a certain sum, which sum was unlawfully taken from the Bank; the same gentleman, whom, in the eleventh report, we find issuing *wind bills* at Somerset House, while he was boasting, in St. Stephen's Chapel, of the glorious effects of his "solid system of finance;" this same identical gentleman gave notice, on Thursday, of his intention to make, next Monday, a motion for ..... *what*, think you? ..... Why, to appoint *another Board of Commissioners* to inquire into the expenditure of the public money in *all the public offices!* Expenditure which has taken place *under himself!* But, it was well known, that *Mr. Grey intended to move for such a commission*; and, in that case, observe, the minister, the principal person whose conduct is to be inquired into, would not have had the *choosing of the Commissioners who are to make that inquiry!* [This subject shall be revived.]

AFFAIRS OF INDIA.——While we are seeking for justice on that person, who has, for so many years been deceiving us at home, it is not unnecessary to look towards that immense country, over which he exercised, during the same time, a sway almost undivided.——A correspondent, at the close of the foregoing sheet (p. 639) made a reference to the statements of Mr. Francis, upon the subject of the debts and revenues of India, and upon which I think it necessary to offer a few remarks.——On the subject of the India Company's debts, Mr. Francis, it will be remembered, has never stated any thing by *conjecture*. He is strict in his dates, and has invariably taken the amount in every year from the accounts laid before Parliament by the Court of Directors. Now by these accounts, it appears that the debt in India amounted to twenty millions, within a trifle, on the 30th of March, 1803; he made no computation of what it might probably amount to *now*. But, if the *heavy pressure*, as Lord Castlereagh calls it, of the Mahratta war, in the two last years, be taken into the calculation, it is not at all improbable that, at this time, even the *acknowledged* debt may have swelled to thirty millions, or much more. As to the nett territorial revenue, Mr. Francis only made use of Lord Castlereagh's own words, two years ago, in stating it at thirteen millions. By this time it ought to be much more. Supplies raised by other means, as my correspondent properly observes, make part of the annual receipts, but not of the annual revenue. He says, that "if there be an actual revenue in India of "thirteen millions, a debt of twenty-one, "or even of thirty millions, may be paid off, "in a very few years." True; provided your expenses are reduced within your income so far as to leave a nett effective surplus applicable to the reduction of the debt; provided it be considerable; and provided it be so applied. The English nation has been so long gulled, absolutely gulled, with Mr. Dundas's estimates and promises, that it is not likely they should be gulled again by the same audacity, in the same form.—My correspondent is of opinion, that the Indian establishments ought to be reduced to the amount, at which they stood, when Lord Cornwallis quitted the government of Bengal. *(To b Continued.)*

LORD MELVILLE.

"I grant, your Worship that he is a knave, Sir: "yet God forbid, Sir, but a knave should have "some countenance at his friend's request. The "honest man, Sir, is able to speak for himself, "when a knave is not. I have served your Wor"ship truly, Sir, this eight years; and if I cannot, "once or twice in a quarter, bear out a knave a"gainst an honest man, I have but very little cre"dit with your Worship. The knave is mine ho"nest friend; therefore I beseech your Worship let "him be countenanced." SHAKESPEARE.

The investigation of Lord Melville's delinquency has naturally drawn back the attention of the public to the period when that measure was adopted by the legislature, the "gross violation" of which has for the moment compelled his Lordship to retire from the *ostensible* management of public affairs, and from the *official* distribution of the favours of the Crown. According to some reports, indeed, Lord Melville does but bend only till the storm has passed over him, and will soon erect his branching honours to the sky. It may be so, indeed, unless the people of England are true to their representatives, and their representatives are consistent with themselves.——In revising the proceedings of those years in which inquiry and reform of abuses were the universal cry both in and out of Parliament, it is curious to compare the convicted delinquents of 1805, and their patrons, with the patriots of 1784 and 1785. Twenty years have now afforded men time to reflect upon the pompous promises, the exaggerated professions, the stern Spartan virtue of the Pitts and the Melvilles pursuing every delinquent, denouncing every abuse, and menacing every offender. Men of sense look back with sorrow and bitterness of heart to those times in which unfledged patriots and hacknied drudges of power assumed the garb of reformers—when some were consecrated from their youth to the sense of the State, and hardened sinners were converted—when young men saw visions, and old men dreamed dreams. The people of England looked upon this universal effusion of the spirit of patriotism as the commencement of a new æra. The Pitts and Dundasses preached a Milennium to the political and religious Saints. An auction of popularity was opened, and the swindlers, the imposters, and the bankrupts, who neither had the means nor the intention to pay, were the purchasers. The miserable deluded people of England became the victims of mountebanks and cheats. If any man doubts the accuracy of this description, let him compare Mr. Pitt and Mr. Dundas in their whole conduct with their professions, but especially let them compare Mr. Pitt and Mr. Dundas, the authors of the Act for Regulating the Office of Treasurer of the Navy, with the Lord Melville of the Tenth Report, guilty of a "gross violation of the law," and high breach of duty, and Mr. Pitt conducting his defence.——There was some-

thing, indeed, singularly ridiculous in seeing Lord Melville before the Commissioners of Naval Inquiry, refusing to answer for fear of exposing himself to *pains* or *penalties*—that same man who had moved so many bills of pains and penalties, bills for restraining peculators, for tying up their property.—This is a revolution which ought not to have been expected even in the vicissitudes of human affairs, though in 1785 it might have been predicted of Mr, Dundas ——It is wonderful to trace the progress of Lord Melville in his political career. When first appointed Treasurer of the Navy, he was absolutely ashamed of his greatness. Mark the maiden modesty of Grimbald. It is a fact that Lord Melville did really profess in the House of Commons this bashful diffidence; and, as even then some might have been ready to sneer, he got Mr. Rigby to bear testimony in his favour. Mr. Dundas protested that the place was not fit for him, and Mr. Rigby added, " he could vouch for him that he had told him *many months ago, that he was ashamed that a Lord Advocate, who was at the head of the Bar in Scotland, should hold so lucrative an employment,* and one so little connected with his profession, as was that of Treasurer of the Navy." Here is as good a scene of hypocrisy as Richard III. Dr. Shaw, and the Lord Mayor of London. This same modest gentleman we soon find Treasurer of the Navy, President of the Board of Control, and War Secretary, not to speak of lucrative sinecures! But, indeed, allowing Lord Melville every aptitude for improvement, it must have required no small discipline to make him the perfect character he now appears.——Lord Melville, however, now stands before his country a man guilty of a " gross violation of law and a high breach of duty." He has, in consequence of the Vote of the House of Commons, *resigned.*—But is resignation of an active, responsible station, and a seat in the Cabinet, sufficient atonement to the violated law of the land? Some years ago a person of the name of Cawthorne had been guilty of some trivial malversations as a military officer. That offence was deemed so great, that Colonel Cawthorne was not allowed to *resign* his seat in the House of Commons. Mr. Pitt would not give him any of the customary offices that vacate a seat. He was expelled the House. We beg the attention of the country to that incident.—Yet, will Canning, or any other man, (and if Canning won't nobody will,) pretend that Cawthorne's offence was more heinous in itself, more dangerous in its example, more repugnant to [illegible] more inconsistent with the honour and dignity of Parliament, than Lord Melville's? Shall any man tell us that a peddling malversation in coals and candles was a higher delinquency than the gross violation of a law, than the application of public money to the purposes of private emolument? If Col. Cawthorne was unanimously expelled the House of Commons, and was not suffered to resign his seat, shall Lord Melville simply resign loaded with places and sinecures? Does not equal justice and sound principle, and wise precaution, demand that Lord Melville should be removed from all " places of trust or emolument which he holds during the pleasure of the Crown, and from his Majesty's presence and councils for ever?"—If nothing farther is done to mark the deep sense of Parliament, and the whole country, of Lord Melville's delinquency, the public will soon find that nothing has been effected. It will be found that Lord Melville will continue to exercise all the patronage of Scotland; it will be found that he will interpose his pernicious counsels in every department. We have no security that he will not still pollute the Admiralty. We hope, indeed, that inquiry will be made in Parliament, whether Lord Melville has not made a good many appointments since the 8th current. It may be proper to call for the dates of some commissions.—It is a mockery to say with some persons, whose motives are perfectly well known, that enough has been done by voting Lord Melville's conduct a gross violation of law. Is it the course of criminal justice, in this or any other country, to *declare* simply that the law has been violated? What is the natural consequence of such a declaration? Is it impunity or the application of the penalty?—In the name of common sense, why declare the violation, and then resolve to do nothing? In logical consequence, and in common sense, it were more consistent to deny the violation, than to affirm it and stop short. The resignation of Lord Melville is not in the parliamentary course of proceeding the consequence of the vote. Lord Melville upon that vote *chose* to resign; but to the House of Commons that is not satisfaction: that was Lord Melville's act, not the act of the House of Commons. It remains for the House of Commons to perfect the proceedings they have commenced. They could not help Lord Melville's resigning to anticipate his being turned out, as Mr. Pitt prevented Colonel Cawthorne resigning to prevent his being expelled. Lord Melville *resigned* forsooth! Why 'tis but Jack Falstaff's trick after all! Because he is afraid to stand the battle, he squats him

down till the hurley burley's over. Lord Melville saw his political life in danger, and finds it time to—*counterfeit.* Counterfeit! *I lie, I am no counterfeit. To die is to be a counterfeit, for he is but the counterfeit of a man who hath not the life of a man; but to counterfeit dying when a man thereby liveth, is to be no counterfeit, but the true and perfect image of life indeed.*"—'Sblood it was time to counterfeit when the House of Commons would have paid him *scot and lot* too!—To tell us, therefore, that Lord Melville's *resignation* of one place, (which there were so many reasons for his never holding at all), and for resigning after he had the boldness to take it, is a mockery of the good sense and honest feeling of the people of England. It is a language fabricated by knaves, and made current among fools. Let those who hold it keep and answer for it to their consciences; and, if they are parliament men, to their constituents. Most people of plain sense will discover the folly or the knavery of those who pompously declare the law violated, and yet do nothing to assert its justice, and to apply the penalty.—But is Lord Melville's a case that calls for so strange, anomalous a proceeding, for such an abdication of the living active powers of law? Was it a thoughtless, a negligent violation of the law? was it by one not understanding it, with avocations to divert him from it? Was Lord Melville asleep, or upon a journey?—Was not Lord Melville a framer of the bill? Is not Lord Melville the very Mr. Dundas of whom Mr. Pitt, in his speech in a Committee of the whole House, on the Reports of the Commissioners of Accounts, Feb. 17, 1785, in moving the first steps of that act which Lord Melville has violated, speaks thus: "He had the happiness to say that his Right Hon. Friend, the present Treasurer of the Navy (Mr. Dundas) had, in consequence of the Report of the Commissioners on his *particular office, taken the whole of the practice, and of their suggestions, into his most able* consideration; and he had, after much inquiry and deliberate consultation, formed *a plan which promised to be effectual?*—What, then, were the suggestions of the Commissioners of Accounts? In their Third Report, they say that the Treasurer should be a "mere accountant." In their Eighth Report they say——— "The Legislature have, in the last Session "of Parliament, introduced into the office "of the Paymaster General of the Forces a "regulation, which, as it seems to us, may "be applied as beneficially to the office of "the Treasurer of the Navy. The custody "of the cash applicable to the Navy services may be transferred from the Treasurer to the Bank of England, and the account only of the receipts and payments "be kept in his office; all the sums now "received by him may be received by the "Bank; sums from the Exchequer may be "imprested to the Bank; sums directed by "the letters of the different boards to be "paid to him, may be directed to be paid "into the Bank; all bills assigned upon him "for payment may be paid, and all extra "payments may be made by his drafts upon "the Bank; the payment of the seamen, "the artificers and labourers in the yards, "and the persons in the hospital ships, and "on the half-pay lists, must be carried on in "the same manner it is now: these men "cannot be paid by drafts; they must have "cash, and with that cash the pay clerks "must be entrusted as they are at present; "and the Treasurer must continue to be "responsible for them, as for officers of his "appointment, and under his control; but "this will be no obstruction to the regulation. The money may be all issued to "the Pay Clerks by the Drafts of the Treasurer upon the Bank, according to the requisitions of the Navy Board, in like manner as many of these sums are issued at "this day; and, upon the death or resignation of a Treasurer, the balances of his "cash in the Bank, and in the hands of his "Pay Clerks, may be struck immediately, "and carried over to the account of his successor. In this situation, the Treasurer, "neither receiving nor paying public money himself, can be neither debtor to, nor "creditor of the public, except as far as he "may be responsible for his Clerks." Now all these suggestions Mr. Dundas took into his *most able consideration*; and he framed an act upon them, in the very words of those suggestions, and to the express end of them was the act drawn.—— And yet was the law obeyed? Was the act thus framed to reform all abuses, carried into effect? Did this Treasurer of the Navy, outstripping the glory of all his predecessors, and sweeping away all their errors, even do justice to his own measure? No, no.—Hardly was the ceremony consummated when the infidelity was committed.

> —— In this other was there found
> More faith, who also in his prime of love
> Spousal embraces, *vitiated with gold*, &c. &c.

No, no, Mr. Dundas shewed no kindness for this his own sacred wedded love—He repudiated this honest partner introduced by him with such solemnity into Somerset House; Trotter came in between them, and for ever separates Mr. Dundas and this dear

object of his tenderness and duty. ——In truth, the Act was no sooner passed than it was violated. Mr. Trotter in his examination, Tenth Report, page 201, admits that so early as the year 1786, money was drawn out and lodged in a private Banker's, "with "the knowledge and approbation of the "Treasurer of the Navy."——This practice, so manifestly against law, and declared by the House of Commons to be so, was pursued all the time of Lord Melville's Treasurership.——Now will it be pretended this was a venial offence?—If there are circumstances that tend to aggravate the guilt of criminals, are not all those circumstances combined in the case of Lord Melville?—Did not Lord Melville, courting popularity, a member of an administration whose mountebank tricks, whose shameless misrepresentations, whose bold professions, whose pretensions to immaculate purity, had cajoled all the republicans, all the seditious tribe, all the giddy multitude, and many of the sober-minded too, over to their party, bring in this very Act?—Did he not claim particular merit for a measure, excellent for its purpose indeed, but stolen from Mr. Burke's Paymaster's Bill, and from the Reports of the Commissioners?—Could Lord Melville be ignorant of the object it had in view?—If the Act was calculated to answer the end why not enforce it?—If it was defective, why not, in imitation of Mr. Burke, in regard to the Pay Office Act, bring in a Bill to correct what was wrong? And is the open violation of an Act of Parliament, attended with such aggravated circumstances, to be merely noticed in a *declaratory* resolution? After this will it be equal justice to punish culprits for violating laws made by others, when Lord Melville escapes with impunity, though guilty of violating from *corrupt motives* a law made by himself?—After this will Judges or Juries have the courage to punish twelve penny-halfpenny rogues?—Messrs. Thorntons and Bankes and Wilberforce, what say ye to this?—Is *resignation* of the Admiralty punishment for the violation of a specific law?—Does your code of law and morals tell you so?—Will you strain at a gnat and swallow a camel?——We have said that Lord Melville has been guilty of the violation of the law, from corrupt motives. That indeed is an aggravation, but the simple violation of the law, is sufficient to infer punishment, and we assert, that in the legal or even ordinary acceptation of the word, Lord Melville's resignation of an office from which, in all probability, he would on no other grounds have been removed in a week or two, is not punishment. If it is considered how many motives of honour, duty, attachment to his own law, Mr. Dundas had to cause the 25th of the King, c. 31, to be obeyed, it will appear in the highest degree suspicious, that without any reasonable object of convenience, which will bear the slightest examination,* he allowed it to be totally disregarded, on the bare suggestion of his paymaster. Is it credible that Mr. Dundas would have done so without some strong reason; he who had studied, he who had seen, he who tried to correct the abuses which he instantly replaced and restored, though condemned by the House of Commons, as he has been, though he hopes, no doubt, in the same manner, to be *replaced* and *restored?* Will it be credited that Lord Melville, who, from his habit of attending to the subject, could, with a single glance, see what was doing in an office he had just regulated from top to bottom, should be ignorant of Trotter's views and proceedings? It is impossible. Could he, by law "the accountant," nothing more than responsible accountant of the office, not see that Trotter had balances applied to profit and advantage? If he did not see these things, he took 5,000l. a-year for doing nothing, and neglected the public business. ——That he shared with Trotter, and very largely too, we have no manner of doubt. It is proved as to 10 or 20,000l. by Trotter's admission, and more by his silent or his reluctant answers. As to the confusion of accounts, instead of mending Lord Melville's case, really makes it more criminal. What, the "Accountant" (see the Third Report of the Commissioners of Accounts) of, perhaps, 14 or 16 millions a-year, suffers his deputy, and agent, for sixteen years, to mix accounts in such a manner, that he cannot tell whether he borrows Trotter's money, or the public money? To borrow during the subsistence of an illegal proceeding permitted by Lord M. and which he could not but know was illegal *without asking any questions*, is in itself so scandalous, so indecent, that it looks like a receiver of stolen goods, buying all wares without *asking any questions*. This is really no better than Jonathan Wild's shop. An honest man *would* have asked questions. A man of nice feeling and honour would not have first allowed Trotter to violate the law, then have employed him as private agent,

* Even Mr. Trotter, on quitting the office, suggested a plan which made it unnecessary, on any pretext, to do what he pleaded convenience for doing.

then have borrowed money from him, and last of all have the effrontery to say that he considered himself debtor to Trotter, just as he might have been to any other man!!!—The friends of Lord M. have endeavoured to divert the charge from Lord Melville to Trotter. All but the official defenders, who dare not, have thrown the whole blame on the latter. We never have joined, and never will join, in *that* pursuit. That Trotter is to blame is unquestionable, but in a far inferior degree to Lord Melville. Lord M. knew the abuses in both the great pay-offices, the deficiencies, malversations, &c. &c.; and he had made a law to prevent such practices. Why then, not instantly check Trotter for proposing to deviate in a tittle from the law? It was natural for Trotter to wish to make the most of his situation. But it was the business and the duty of Lord Melville instantly and peremptorily to reject Trotter's proposal for employing a private banker. "*Had he but shook his head, or made a pause, or turned an eye of doubt,*" Trotter would never again have mentioned the project, and the law would not have been violated. But he immediately consented and approved (p. 200). It was Lord Melville then, that by his connivance, upon a pretence most shallow, contemptible and false, embarked Trotter in a career from which the advice of a friend, or the authority of a superior, should at once have saved him.——Will it be said that Lord Melville was imposed upon—Lord Melville who had repeatedly been treasurer; who had read the reports, and taken the whole into his "*most able consideration?*" Could *he* have been deceived by the idle story which Trotter states to the Commissioners? Impossible. He must have seen the object. He must have known that Trotter was making large sums of money, since he borrowed, not as from a slender driblet of fortune, but *mago de flumine* —10 or 20,000 at a time. Will negligence of pecuniary affairs justify such proceedings as these in a public man, receiving vast sums from the nation, to superintend its servants and guard its interests? But if it is considered how closely Lord Melville stuck to the office of Treasurer of the Navy, how he has protected Trotter, who, if Lord Melville be *innocent*, has been the instrument of his undoing, it will be impossible for any rational man to doubt that it was partly for *his own* interest that he suffered Trotter to violate, abrogate, and annul his *own* act of parliament!——But has not Lord Melville violated the law, and are we to be told that he acted from no *bad* motive? We should be glad to hear what *good* motive he could have for suffering a law, *his own law*, to be violated? Is it consistent either with the forms or the substance of justice, to call upon those who demand the punishment of a *convicted delinquent*, to prove the bad motive? Does not the violation of the law presume the bad motive, and has Lord Melville purged himself from the innumerable suspicions out of which the conclusion of his being a partner in the profit arises? We have no doubt that legal proceedings against him and Mr. Trotter, will afford legal proof of the partnership.——In the mean time we most anxiously recommend the whole transaction to the serious consideration of all the people of England. Lord Melville has been, on his own confession, found guilty of a "gross violation of the law, and a high breach of duty," and we maintain that in consistency and in common sense, punishment ought to follow. Lord Melville's resignation *is not punishment.* A man loaded with peerages, with pensions and patent places, retiring at near seventy years of age is *not* punished. For its splendour it might be the retreat of Scipio; but it is that of Verres. Let us remember too, that probably it precipitated the downfal of the Roman Republic, that Verres *lived* to see it!——As to the quantum of punishment, we still think Mr. Whitbread's motion of Wednesday, the 10th, embraces the most moderate, the most practical measure. Many, very many, think that infinitely *too* light for the aggravated enormity of Lord Melville's deliberate transgression. But let us hear no more of the miserable subterfuges which would reduce to nothing the vote of the House of Commons. The country expects from its representatives that a declared "*violation of the law* and high breach of duty," *shall not* escape with impunity.

DOMESTIC OFFICIAL PAPERS.

LONDON COMMON HALL.—— PERCHARD, MAYOR.——*In a Meeting or Assembly of the Mayor, Aldermen, and Liverymen of the several Companies of the City of London, in Common Hall assembled, at the Guildhall of the said City, on Thursday the 18th Day of April,* 1805.

RESOLVED UNANIMOUSLY,——That it appears from the reports of the Commissioners for Naval Inquiry, that the Right Hon. Henry Dundas, Viscount Melville, late treasurer of his Majesty's navy, has been guilty of a gross violation of the law, and a high breach of duty, whereby immense sums of the public money have been put out to hazard, by being employed in speculations for private emolument and advantage.——

RESOLVED, That such gross and aggravated breaches of fidelity in men holding high and confidential offices in the state, render it peculiarly necessary and important, that every possible effect should be given to the inquiries now before Parliament respecting the same, so that condign punishment may follow convicted criminality.——RESOLVED UNANIMOUSLY, That it is highly essential, for the purpose of fully inquiring into the receipt, management, and expenditure of the public money, and the conduct of the public offices, and for completely investigating all abuses, that the powers of the said commissioners should be prolonged and extended, and such other measures adopted as may appear necessary for the detection and punishment of all offenders, and for establishing such a system of vigilance and economy as may effectually guard against the recurrence of such flagrant abuses.——RESOLVED UNANIMOUSLY, That a petition to that effect be presented to the hon. House of Commons. And the draft of a petition being prepared, was read and approved.——RESOLVED UNANIMOUSLY, That the said petition be engrossed and left at the Town Clerk's Office, Guildhall, for the signatures of the livery, every day, except Sunday, between the hours of 10 and 2, until Wednesday next, the 24th inst.——RESOLVED UNANIMOUSLY, That the said petition be presented to the honourable House of Commons, by the representatives of this City in Parliament.——RESOLVED UNANIMOUSLY, That our representatives in Parliament be and they are hereby instructed, to support the said petition, and to give their utmost parliamentary assistance in promoting and prosecuting these inquiries, and also their strenuous support to such motion or motions as may have for their object the removal from his Majesty's councils, or any place of trust, profit or honour, in or under the government, all persons who may be implicated in, or have connived at, such flagrant abuses.——RESOLVED UNANIMOUSLY, That the virtuous and independent decision of the House of Commons on these nefarious transactions, is highly honourable to themselves, and grateful to the country at large, while the strong and general impression produced upon the public mind, effectually evinces, that the English constitution can never cease to be the pride and veneration of Britons, so long as our representatives continue to be the faithful guardians of the people.——RESOLVED UNANIMOUSLY, That we do highly approve the very able and indefatigable exertions of the Commissioners for Naval Inquiry in the investigation of the public accounts; and the firm and inflexible integrity with which they have exposed the unprincipled perversion of public money to private emolument.——RESOLVED UNANIMOUSLY, That the thanks of this Common Hall be given to the representatives of this City in Parliament for supporting the resolutions of the House of Commons on the 8th instant.——RESOLVED UNANIMOUSLY, That the thanks of this Common Hall be given to such of the livery as have seats in Parliament, who supported the said resolutions.—RESOLVED UNANIMOUSLY, That the thanks of this Common Hall be given to the Right Hon. John Earl of St. Vincent, who was the primary cause of that investigation, by which the abuses in the naval department have been brought to light.——RESOLVED UNANIMOUSLY, That the thanks of this Common Hall be given to the Right Hon. the Lord Mayor, for his fair and impartial conduct this day. WOODTHORPE.

FOREIGN OFFICIAL PAPERS.

AMERICAN PRESIDENT'S SPEECH.—*Washington, March 4.—This day, at twelve o'clock, Thomas Jefferson, President of the United States, took the oath of office; and delivered the following inaugural Speech, in the Senate Chamber, in the presence of the Members of the two Houses, and a large concourse of citizens.*

Proceeding, fellow citizens, to that qualification which the constitution requires, before my entrance on the charge again conferred on me, it is my duty to express the deep sense I entertain of this new proof of confidence from my fellow-citizens at large, and the zeal with which it inspires me so to conduct myself as may best satisfy their just expectations.——On taking this station on a former occasion, I declared the principles on which I believed it my duty to administer the affairs of our commonwealth. My conscience tells me that I have on every occasion acted up to that declaration according to its obvious import, and according to the understanding of every candid mind.——In the transaction of your foreign affairs, we have endeavoured to cultivate the friendship of all nations, and especially of those with which we have the most important relations. We have done them justice on all occassons, favour where favour was lawful, and cherished mutual interests and intercourse on fair and equal terms; we are firmly convinced, and we act on that conviction, that with nations as with individuals, our interests, soundly calculated, will ever be found inseparable from our

moral duties. And history bears witness to the fact, that a just nation is trusted on its word, when recourse is had to armaments and wars to bridle others.—— At home, fellow-citizens, you best know whether we have done well or ill. The suppression of unnecessary offices, of useless establishments and expenses, enable us to discontinue our internal taxes. These, covering our land with officers, and opening our doors to their intrusions, had already begun that process of domiciliary vexation, which, once entertained, is scarcely to be restrained from reaching successively every article of produce and of property. If among these taxes some minor ones fell, which had not been inconvenient, it was because their amount would not have paid the officers who collected them, and because if they had any merit, the state athorities might adopt them instead of others less approved. ——The remaining revenue on the consumption of foreign articles, is paid chiefly by those who can afford to add foreign luxuries to domestic comforts. Being collected on our sea-board and frontiers only, and incorporated with the transactions of our mercantile citizens, it may be the pleasure and the pride of an American to ask, what farmer, what mechanic, what labourer, ever sees a tax-gatherer of the United States? These contributions enable us to support the current expenses of the government, to fulfil contracts with foreign nations, to extinguish the native right of soil within our limits, to extend those limits, and to apply such a surplus to our public debts, as places at a short day their final redemption, and that redemption once effected, the revenue thereby liberated, may by a just reparation among the states, and a corresponding amendment of the constitution, be applied, in time of peace, to rivers, canals, roads, arts, manufactures, education, and other great objects within each state. In time of war, if injustice by ourselves or others must sometimes produce war, increased as the same revenue will be by increased population and consumption, and aided by other resources reserved for that crisis, it may meet within the year all the expenses of the year, without encroaching on the rights of future generations, by burthening them with the debts of the past. War will then be but a suspension of useful works, and a return to a state of peace, a return to the progress of improvement.——I have said, fellow-citizens, that the income reserved had enabled us to extend our limits; but that extension may possibly pay for itself before we are called on, and in the mean time may keep down the accruing interest. In all events it will replace the advances we shall have made. I know that the acquisition of Louisiana has been disapproved by some, from a candid apprehension that the enlargement of our territory may endanger its union; but who can limit the extent to which the federative principle may operate effectively? — The larger our association, the less will it be shaken by local passions, and in any view is it not better that the opposite bank of the Mississippi should be settled by our own brethren and children, than by strangers of another family?—With which shall we be most likely to live in harmony and friendly intercourse?——In matters of religion I have considered that its free exercise is placed by the constitution, independent of the powers of the general government. I have therefore undertaken, on no occasion, to prescribe the religious exercises suited to it; but have left them as the constitution found them, under the direction or discipline of the state or church authorities acknowledged by the several religious societies.——The aboriginal inhabitants of these countries I have regarded with the commiseration their history inspires. Endowed with the faculties and the rights of men, breathing an ardent love of liberty and independence, and occupying a country which left them no desire but to be undisturbed, the stream of overflowing population from other regions directed itself on these shores. Without power to divert, or habits to contend against it, they have been overwhelmed by the current, or driven before it. Now reduced within limits too narrow for the hunter state, humanity enjoins us to teach them agriculture and the domestic arts; to encourage them to that industry which alone can enable them to maintain their place in existence, and to prepare them in time for that state of society, which, to bodily comforts, adds the improvement of the mind and morals. We have therefore liberally furnished them with the implements of husbandry and household use: we have placed among them instructors in the arts of first necessity; and they are covered with the ægis of the law against aggressors from among ourselves.——But the endeavours to enlighten them on the fate which awaits their present course of life, to induce them to exercise their reason, follow its dictates, and change their pursuits with the change of circumstances, have powerful obstacles to encounter. They are combated by the habits of their bodies, prejudices of their minds, ignorance, pride, and the influence of interested and crafty

individuals among them, who feel themselves something in the present order of things, and fear to become nothing in any other. These persons inculcate a sanctimonious reverence for the customs of their ancestors; that whatever they did must be done through all time; that reason is a false guide, and to advance under its counsel in their physical, moral, or political condition, is perilous innovation: that their duty is to remain as their Creator made them, ignorance being safety, and knowledge full of danger. In short, my friends, among them also is seen the action and counter-action of good sense and of bigotry. They too have their anti philosophists, who find an interest in keeping things in their present state; who dread reformation, and exert all their faculties to maintain the ascendancy of habit over the duty of improving our reason and obeying its mandates.——In giving these outlines, I do not mean, to arrogate to myself the merit of measures. That is due, in the first place, to the reflecting character of our citizens at large, who, by the weight of public opinion, influence and strengthen the public measures. It is due to the sound discretion with which they select from among themselves those to whom they confide the legislative duties. It is due to the zeal and wisdom of the characters thus selected, who lay the foundation of public happiness in wholesome laws, the execution of which alone remains for others; and it is due to the able and faithful auxiliaries, whose patriotism has associated them with me in the executive functions.——During this course of administration, and in order to disturb it, the artillery of the press has been levelled against us, charged with whatever its licentiousness could devise or dare. These abuses of an institution so important to freedom and science, are deeply to be regretted, inasmuch as they tend to lessen its usefulness, and to sap its safety. They might, perhaps, have been corrected by the wholesome punishments reserved to, and provided by, the laws of the several states, against falsehood and defamation. But public duties more urgent, press on the time of public servants, and the offenders have therefore been left to find their punishment in the public indignation.——Now was it uninteresting to the world thai an experiment should be fairly and fully made, whether freedom of discussion, unaided by power, is not sufficient for the propagation and protection of truth?—Whether a government, conducting itself in the true spirit of its constitution, with zeal and purity, and doing no act which it would be unwilling the whole world should witness, can be written down by falsehood and defamatiou? The experiment has been tried. You have witnessed the scene. Our fellow citizens have looked on cool and collected. They saw the latent source from which these outrages proceeded. They gathered around their public functionaries; and when the constitution called them to the decision by suffrage, they pronounced their verdict, honourable to those who had served them, and consolatory to the friend of man, who believes he may be entrusted with the controul of his own afiairs.——No inference is here intended that the laws provided by the states against false and defamatory publications should not be inforced. He who has time renders a service to the public morals and public tranquillity, in reforming these abuses by the salutary coercions of the law. But the experiment is noted to prove that, since truth and reason have maintained their ground against false opinions in league with false facts, the press confined to truth, needs no other legal restraint. The public judgement will correct false reasonings and opinions, on a full hearing of all parties, and no other definite line can be drawn between the inestimable liberty of the press, and its demoralizing licentiousness. If there be still improprieties which this rule would not restrain, its supplement must be sought in the censorship of public opinion.——Contemplating the union of sentiment now manifested so generally, as arguing harmony and happiness to our future course, I offer to our country sincere congratulations. With those too not yet rallied to the same point, the disposition to do so is gaining strength. Facts are piercing through the veil drawn over them; and our doubting brethren will at length see that the mass of their fellow-citizens, with whom they cannot yet resolve to act, as to principles and measures think as they think, and desire what they desire. That our wish as well as theirs, is that the public efforts may be directed honestly to the public good, that peace be cultivated, civil and religious liberty unassailed, law and order preserved, equality of rights maintained, and that state of property, equal or unequal, which results to every man from his own industry or that of his fathers. When satisfied of these views, it is not in human nature that they should not approve and support them. In the meantime let us cherish them with patient affection. Let us do them justice, and more than justice, in all competitions of interest; and we need not doubt that truth, reason, and their own interest, will at length pre-

vail, will gather them into the fold of their country, and will complete that entire union of opinion, which gives to a nation the blessings of harmony, and the benefit of all its strength.——I shall now enter on the duties to which my fellow-citizens have again called me; and shall proceed in the spirit of those principles which they have approved. I fear not that any motives of interest may lead me astray; I am sensible of no passion which could reduce me knowingly from the path of justice; but the weakness of human nature, and the limits of my own understanding, will produce errors of judgement sometimes injurious to your interests, I shall need, therefore, all the indulgence I have heretofore experienced; the want of it certainly will not lessen with increasing years. I shall need too the favour of that Being in whose hands we are, who led our fathers, as Israel of old, from their native land, and planted them in a country flowing with all the necessaries and comforts of life; who has covered our infancy with his providence, and our riper years with his wisdom and his power; and to whose goodness I ask you to join with me in supplications, that he will so enlighten the minds of your servants, guide their councils, and prosper their measures, that whatsoever they do shall result in your gobd, and shall secure to you the peace, friendship, and approbation of all nations.

THOMAS JEFFERSON.

REFORM OF FINANCIAL ABUSES.

LETTER II.

SIR,——In my letter of the 11th. I stated generally the defects of the method in use of making up the public accounts. I shall now proceed to expose those defects in detail, and to examine the principles on which the public income is collected; received from the collectors: paid into the Exchequer; and finally paid by the state to its creditors.——The most obvious and fundamental defect of the present method is, that of its being merely an account of things, and not as it ought to be an account of persons. An account of the things that are taxed, and the things that are paid for. So far, no doubt, the account is of great service, and should be continued in its present form. But instead of being the only account in which any information is to be procured concerning the revenues of the country, it should be considered as a mere supplementary account, abstracted and compiled from the NATIONAL LEDGER.——From the nature and extent of the revenue and expenditure of this country it will necessarily happen, that great confidence must be placed in many individuals. But how is it to be expected that the public money can be safe from peculation, if these individuals know, that their accounts are never *fairly* before the public? Wherever confidence of this nature is placed, checques and control should be instituted in the same proportion. But how can this species of security be fully attained unless the account of every individual is fairly brought forward?——It will probably be said, that the public business is too extensive to be detailed according to the method adopted by persons in trade. This objection may be set aside, first by referring to the principle of mercantile accounts; and secondly, by the practice of them.—Every one the least acquainted with these principles, must know, that the first is that of subdividing the business to be placed under account in such a manner, that each distinct part may be kept in a distinct account, and that this previous arrangement so entirely precludes confusion that one account of the whole may at any time be made out, not only very accurately, but with great dispatch. It is exactly so with an army, when each company of a battalion knows its duty, and is once in its proper place, the whole can be moved in an instant into bodies of more extended or more solid form; and no general will surely complain of having too many battalions under his command.——In the same manner with respect to accounts, if the principle of previous subdivision and arrangement is acted upon, the number of subdivisions cannot be an objection to the system, because no two of them can interfere with each other and create confusion. The whole will be easily consolidated into one account of balances, and as each balance will refer to the account on which it is struck, the receipt and application of every tax paid by the subject will be thus exposed to the investigation of the public.—— But, secondly, in addition to this refutation of the objection that may be made to the mercantile system of keeping accounts, there is the practice of the Bank of England, that fully proves its utility as applied to business of even immense extent. Without enumerating the particulars of the business of the Bank, of which the principal parts are the management of a capital of several millions, and the general receipt and payment of the public revenue, it is sufficient to be known that 700 clerks are constantly employed in conducting it. There is no one department of the state in which so much business is done, not even in the excise, in which the greatest revenue is received; nor in the navy department, in which the largest

sum is expended. Let then every one who is employed in collecting, receiving, or paying the public money keep his day book, journal, and ledger. Let copies of his ledger be weekly transmitted to the head of the department to which he belongs. There let an annual account be made up from the balances of these ledgers, to be laid before the House of Commons, but with this account let there be also laid before it an exact copy of each person's ledger. If these ledgers should be too voluminous to be printed, arrangements should be made for their being so placed in a library of the House of Commons, that any of them might be inspected with perfect freedom and the greatest facility, not only by members, but by other persons under certain qualifications. By these means the accounts of every department might be speedily investigated, the money of the public might be traced from the pocket of the subject to the legal application of it by the government; all persons concerned in the collecting or the disbursement of the revenue, would feel a constant control operating over them, and if frauds were committed it would *then* be possible to detect them.——I maintain, therefore, Mr. Cobbett, that there exist many solid reasons for adopting the same system in keeping the public accounts that merchants adopt in keeping theirs, and that there is not one reason upon which it can be said to be inapplicable. The necessity of some alteration is very obvious, and is it not then in perfect consistency with sound wisdom to follow the example of those who actually earn their bread by the punctuality of their dealings, and the accuracy of their accounts?——I shall now proceed to consider the principles upon which the taxes are collected, and those upon which they ought to be collected. It generally happens that the duty of assessing the tax and collecting it is performed by the same person; this is a practice radically bad, because there can exist no control over the rates assessed or the money received. It should always be a rule, that the rate of tax or duty to be paid should be assessed and regulated by one person, and the sum to be paid received by another. This is the case with respect to the assessed taxes, and the same method should be extended to every description of taxes. The labour being thus divided would be performed not only with more ease, but with more skill, and the officers would be a check upon each other. The returns of the assessors to the heads of departments would enable them to judge whether new assessments were necessary, and of the diligence or remissness of the collectors in executing their duty. The offices of collectors and receivers from sub-collectors should never be blended, because, if the principal collector should be dishonest, he will connive at, and probably promote the dishonesty of the sub collectors. And, lastly, no collector should upon any account be permitted to act in the capacity of a paymaster, but be obliged to pay over the whole of his receipt without any abatement whatsoever to the authorised receiving officer. By rendering the business of collecting and paying quite distinct, the system of balances in collectors' hands may be altogether got rid of, and the account of the receipt of the revenue may be relieved from the new fangled distinction and confusion of "payments in anticipation of the receipt." But no more on this head till we come to the discussion of payments in general of the public money. —— As to the duty of receivers of the public money, it clearly should be confined to the receiving of what has been previously received by the collectors, and to the payment of it into the Exchequer. They should in no instance perform the duty either of collectors or of paymasters, and thus they would be the natural control over the collectors, and have no excuse for keeping any balances in their hands.—According to these principles of collecting and receiving the public income, the account of it would be a simple account of the receipt, uninterrupted by deductions, drawbacks, incidents and anticipations; the whole of the money paid by the subject would come into the Exchequer; and by this being made an indispensible step previous to any part of it being applied in payment, a system of paying it may be arranged as simple as the system of receiving it.——But so long as collectors and receivers continue to act as paymasters, large balances must be left in their hands, their accounts must be confused, and opportunities afforded of committing great frauds. The receipt and expenditure must be kept quite distinct to prevent these abuses. This is the only manner by which we can hope to eradicate completely the temptation to practise fraud, and the power of effecting it. And when I have a further opportunity of stating my plan for conducting the payment of the public money, I trust that I shall be able to shew that no more trouble will attend it, than attends the system which is at present followed.——I am, &c.——VERAX. *April 22, 1805.*

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